



CITES UPDATE #61
April 1998



Dear CITES Cooperator:

We would like to inform you of the following:

RESULTS OF THE 40TH MEETING OF THE CITES STANDING COMMITTEE: The United States attended the 40th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee in London, United Kingdom, from 3-6 March, 1998. The first day of the Standing Committee meeting coincided with the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the CITES treaty. The United States was represented at the Standing Committee meeting by Dr. Susan Lieberman, Chief of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Scientific Authority (OSA), and Roberta Chew, of the Department of State's Office of Oceans, Environment, and Science.

One important decision from the meeting pertains to bears and tigers: the Secretariat has been directed to work to convene an international workshop on law enforcement and forensics, to be held in Asia in late 1998, focusing on the illegal trade in bear and tiger parts and products. The United States encourages conservation groups and others interested in tiger and bear conservation to provide funding assistance for this much-needed, important workshop.

Another issue of significant conservation interest pertains to the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). At the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP10), the Parties agreed to transfer three populations of African elephants (Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe) from Appendix I to II, subject to several requirements and annotations. The Standing Committee was charged with determining if the three countries and Japan had met a series of conditions. The Standing Committee is charged with four main tasks and the Standing Committee adopted a decision document that outlines these processes: (1) Establishing a procedure to determine if the criteria have been met, including whether the deficiencies identified by the COP10 Panel of Experts have been addressed. The CITES Secretariat, based on visits to the countries and consultations with key experts, will submit a

report on this issue and its recommendations, to the Standing Committee in advance of the 1999 meeting of the committee. (2) Establishing a process, working with IUCN and WWF/TRAFFIC, to assess whether there is or has been an escalation in either illegal ivory trade or elephant poaching. TRAFFIC International and IUCN (African Elephant Specialist Group) presented the results of a workshop they convened in December 1997 (funded under the Fish and Wildlife Service's African Elephant Conservation Fund), involving experts in elephant biology, management and conservation, ivory trade, and law enforcement; the workshop developed new systems for measuring and monitoring levels and trends in both illegal ivory trade and elephant poaching. The Standing Committee endorsed these efforts, and directed the Secretariat to circulate a report form to all Parties; Parties and NGOs with information on elephant poaching or illegal ivory trade will be encouraged to submit such to the Secretariat. (3) Establishing a process to return the African elephant populations to Appendix I if there is an escalation in poaching or illegal trade, in particular due to the reopening of the ivory trade. The Standing Committee agreed to such a process, which will involve voluntary suspension of ivory trade by the affected countries and a postal vote of the Parties, if necessary. (4) Auditing ivory stockpiles registered by African elephant range states, making them available for non-commercial purchase by donors. TRAFFIC presented a report (adopted by the committee) on the registration of stocks by 15 countries, and their work to audit and verify all stocks. Based on the COP10 decision, these stocks are available for noncommercial sale/transfer to donors, in exchange for the establishment of Conservation Trust Funds.

The Standing Committee also discussed important issues relevant to the listing in CITES Appendix II of all sturgeon species (effective April 1, 1998), and related implementation and enforcement issues. No decisions were made by the committee, but a series of guidelines, based on a January meeting in Moscow of sturgeon range and consumer countries, will be circulated to the Parties. Further dialogue is needed on issues pertaining to pre-Convention stockpiles and quotas. These issues were discussed at the Moscow meeting and the Standing Committee agreed that further discussion on them is needed.

The agenda of the Standing Committee meeting and a list of documents are enclosed. Copies of documents are available upon request from either the Office of Management Authority (OMA) or OSA.

UPCOMING 14th MEETING OF THE CITES ANIMALS COMMITTEE: OMA recently received a set of CITES Secretariat Notifications to the Parties, which included Notification No. 1998/06 regarding the upcoming 14th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee. This Notification informs the Parties that the meeting is scheduled to be held May 25-29, 1998, in the EUROBUILDING Hotel, Caracas, Venezuela. It also transmits the provisional agenda for the meeting, a meeting registration form, and hotel booking information.

It is noted in the Notification that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that wish to be represented at the Animals Committee meeting must receive prior approval from the Chairman of the Committee. Representatives of NGOs will be required to pay a registration

fee of 100 U.S. dollars to the CITES Secretariat in a convertible currency either by check or in cash before the start of the meeting.

A copy of Notification No. 1998/06 is enclosed for your information.

NEW CITES SECRETARIAT NOTIFICATIONS: OMA recently received CITES Secretariat Notifications to the Parties Nos. 1998/05-1998/08. Listed below are summaries of these Notifications. We would appreciate it if any CITES cooperators who request copies from OMA would please limit their requests to specific Notifications:

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| 1998/05 | Cameroon: Lifting of Standing Committee Suspension on Imports of Specimens of <i>Psittacus erithacus</i>
Summary: This Notification notifies the Parties of the lifting of the Standing Committee's recommendation, transmitted in CITES Notification No. 993, to suspend imports of specimens of African grey parrots (<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>) originating in Cameroon. |
| 1998/06 | 14th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee
Summary: See the above item on the 14th meeting of the CITES Animals Committee. |
| 1998/07 | Export Quotas for 1998: Provisional List
Summary: This Notification transmits a provisional list of Parties' export quotas established for calendar year 1998 for specimens of species included in the CITES Appendices. This list replaces the one transmitted in CITES Notification No. 994. |
| 1998/08 | Control of Operations Artificially Propagating Specimens of Appendix I Species
Summary: This Notification lists a nursery in Germany to be included in the Register of Operations Artificially Propagating Specimens of Appendix I Species for Commercial Purposes. |

NOTICE ANNOUNCING PROPOSALS TO REGISTER A CAPTIVE BREEDING

OPERATION: On March 27, 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published a notice in the *Federal Register* (63 FR 14955) announcing that OMA intends to submit to the CITES Secretariat a proposal to register the first U.S. breeder, Sky-Out Falcons, a facility with gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*) and peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), owned and operated by David H. Jamieson of Reno, Nevada, as a commercial breeding operation with Appendix I specimens under CITES Resolution Conf. 8.15. The Sky-Out Falcons operation has been breeding falcons since 1974. All of the offspring produced by the operation are second-generation, or greater. The Service is satisfied that all breeding stock has been legally acquired and maintained under appropriate permits. In addition, Mr. Jamieson has provided detailed information on current holdings, husbandry practices, enclosures,

production at his operation, and breeding strategies for genetic management of his flocks to minimize deleterious inbreeding. As part of the review for developing proposals for the Secretariat, the Service has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and concluded in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that there would be no significant impact on the human environment because of this action.

Comments on registering this facility with the Secretariat must be submitted to OSA by April 27, 1998, when the 30-day comment period ends. Copies of this notice are available upon request from OSA or OMA.

CITES CHECKLIST, ANNOTATED CITES APPENDICES AND RESERVATIONS, AND PUBLICATIONS LIST:

Recently, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in Cambridge, England, sent us complimentary copies of the 1998 edition of the Checklist of CITES Species and the new Annotated CITES Appendices and Reservations. These two publications, compiled by WCMC for the CITES Secretariat, provide the most up-to-date information on which species of fauna and flora are covered by CITES, the history of their listings in the Appendices, and the most complete reference source available on their scientific and common names. WCMC has also made much of the information contained in these two publications available through the Internet on its Web page at the following address: <http://www.wcmc.org.uk/CITES>.

Enclosed for your information is the latest CITES Publications List, also recently provided to us by WCMC. It lists all publications, including the 1998 edition of the Checklist of CITES Species and the new Annotated CITES Appendices and Reservations, which can be ordered from the IUCN Publications Services Unit in Cambridge, England. The last page of the Publications List is the order form.

CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS LINEUP: Recently there have been changes in personnel in several key positions within the Service's International Affairs Assistant Directorship. At the beginning of January, Dr. Charles Dane retired from his former position as Chief of OSA and in mid-February Dr. Susan Lieberman, formerly the Chief of OMA's Branch of CITES Operations, was named OSA Chief. In late February, Kenneth Stansell, Chief of OMA, was named to the new position of Deputy Assistant Director for International Affairs. Also in late February, Teiko Saito, formerly Assistant Director for Civil Rights Programs within the Office of Equal Opportunity, was named Chief of OMA. Teiko, who several years ago was the Chief of OMA's Branch of Permits, will effectively begin as Chief of OMA on April 13, 1998. The now vacant position of Chief of OMA's Branch of CITES Operations is currently being advertised.

NEWS RELEASE: NEW CAVIAR IMPORT MEASURES PROTECT IMPERILED

STURGEON: All sturgeon species which were not already previously listed on the CITES Appendices were effectively listed on CITES Appendix II on April 1, 1998. On March 25, 1998, the Service's Office of Public Affairs issued a news release announcing the new import

measures being taken by the United States to implement the sturgeon's Appendix II listing, thereby curtailing the illegal trade in sturgeon and protecting remaining populations.

A copy of this news release is enclosed for your information.

NEW YORK CITY STORE OWNER PLEADS GUILTY TO WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING: On March 20, 1998, the U.S. Department of Justice issued the following press release announcing the guilty plea of a New York store owner to several charges including wildlife trafficking:

PRESS RELEASE

Zachary W. Carter, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Adam O'Hara, Assistant Regional Director of Law Enforcement, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, and John Cahill, Commissioner of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, today announced the guilty plea of William Stevens to charges of smuggling endangered wildlife into the United States in violation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora ("CITES") and the Endangered Species Act ("ESA"), conspiracy to violate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and conspiracy to violate the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act ("NAGPRA").

Stevens is the sole proprietor of "Evolution: Natural History in Soho," a retail store located at 120 Spring Street in Manhattan, which sells dead wildlife, wildlife parts and products, and human remains. The three-count Information filed today charges that Stevens illegally smuggled the skulls of two gorillas and one babirusa (wild boar) into the United States in July 1997; conspired to sell two bald eagle skulls and other bald eagle parts between March 1995 and July 1997; and conspired to sell human remains of Native Americans, including six skulls, ten skull fragments, and one jaw bone, between March 1995 and August 1997. Stevens faces a combined statutory maximum sentence of eleven years imprisonment and \$600,000 in criminal fines on these charges.

On September 16, 1997, Federal and State law enforcement officers executed a Federal search warrant at the "Evolution" store and seized dozens of protected wildlife species valued in the tens of thousands of dollars. The confiscated items included a tiger skin rug, ashtrays made from gorilla feet, a stool made from an elephant foot, a chimpanzee skeleton, thirty-five lion claws, a walrus skull and tusks, a pangolin, a gibbon arm, and shells from wood turtles.

In commenting on today's guilty plea, Mr. Carter stated, "The illegal market in human remains is offensive and puts money in the hands of grave robbers. The trafficking in rare animals, already struggling for survival, is an ongoing cause of worldwide wildlife loss."

Mr. O'Hara stated, "Many of these animals being taken from the wild are worth more dead than alive to private collectors, who will pay thousands of dollars to possess rare and endangered species."

Stevens voluntarily surrendered, waived indictment, and entered his guilty plea to all charges in the Information before U.S. Magistrate Judge Joan M. Azrack in Federal court in Brooklyn. Stevens' plea agreement requires him to forfeit his interest in numerous wildlife items seized during the course of the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, with assistance from the U.S. Customs Service and the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

Kenneth B. Stansell, Chief
Office of Management Authority

Dr. Susan S. Lieberman, Chief
Office of Scientific Authority

Enclosures

All documents referred to above are available on request from the Office of Management Authority. Address correspondence to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Room 700, Arlington, VA 22203. Telephone (703): Office of Management Authority (OMA) 358-2095, Fax 358-2298; Office of Scientific Authority (OSA) 358-1708, Fax 358-2276; Division of Law Enforcement (LE) 358-1949; Fax 358-2271. Address E-mail requests to: r9oma_cites@mail.fws.gov.